NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND

C O R O N A D O

Fact Sheet No. 11 July 1998

This fact sheet will tell you about . . .

- ***removal of low-level radioactive material at Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island, and***
- ***how you can review the Action Memorandum about this removal.***

Introduction

This is one in a series of fact sheets to inform you of the investigation of hazardous waste contamination and environmental restoration at NAS North Island (see Figure 1). Since 1917, NAS North Island has supported aviation activities of the Naval operating forces. During the operation and maintenance of aircraft at NAS North Island, hazardous wastes have been generated. These wastes include paint, used oil, scrap metal, solvents, and contaminated rinsewater. Past disposal practices, although acceptable at the time, often resulted in contamination of soil and groundwater at various locations on NAS North Island.

BACKGROUND

The Navy has prepared a document called an Action Memorandum about a low-level radioactive material removal action at two Installation Restoration sites (2 and 9) at Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island. This action is being taken under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980. The objective of this removal action is to clean up areas with low-level radioactive contamination to comply with levels put forth by the federal U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state of California. This removal action will substantially eliminate exposure to low-level radioactively contaminated materials.

The planning period for this removal action started January 29, 1998, and the removal action is expected to take place from July through August 1998. This is considered a time-critical removal action, which means that the planning is undertaken within a 6-month period. This is not considered an emergency action.

Site 2

Site 2 is located in the northern part of the base (see Figure 2). The site is an inactive landfill that has been partially capped. Following the cleanup work described here, this area will be used for a parking lot.

A radiological survey of a portion of Site 2 was conducted in September 1997 by the Navy's Radiological Affairs Support Office, as part of a site assessment. More than 20,000 readings

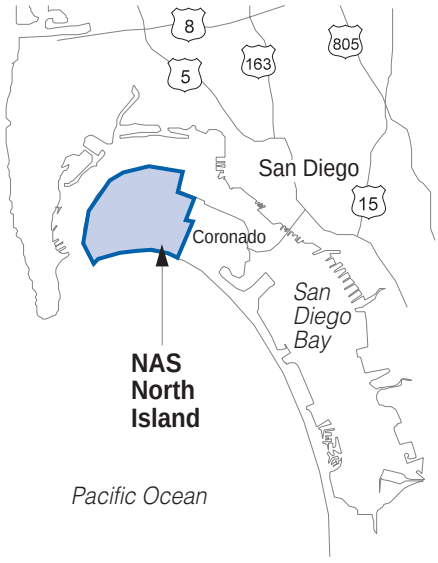

Figure 1 Vicinity Map

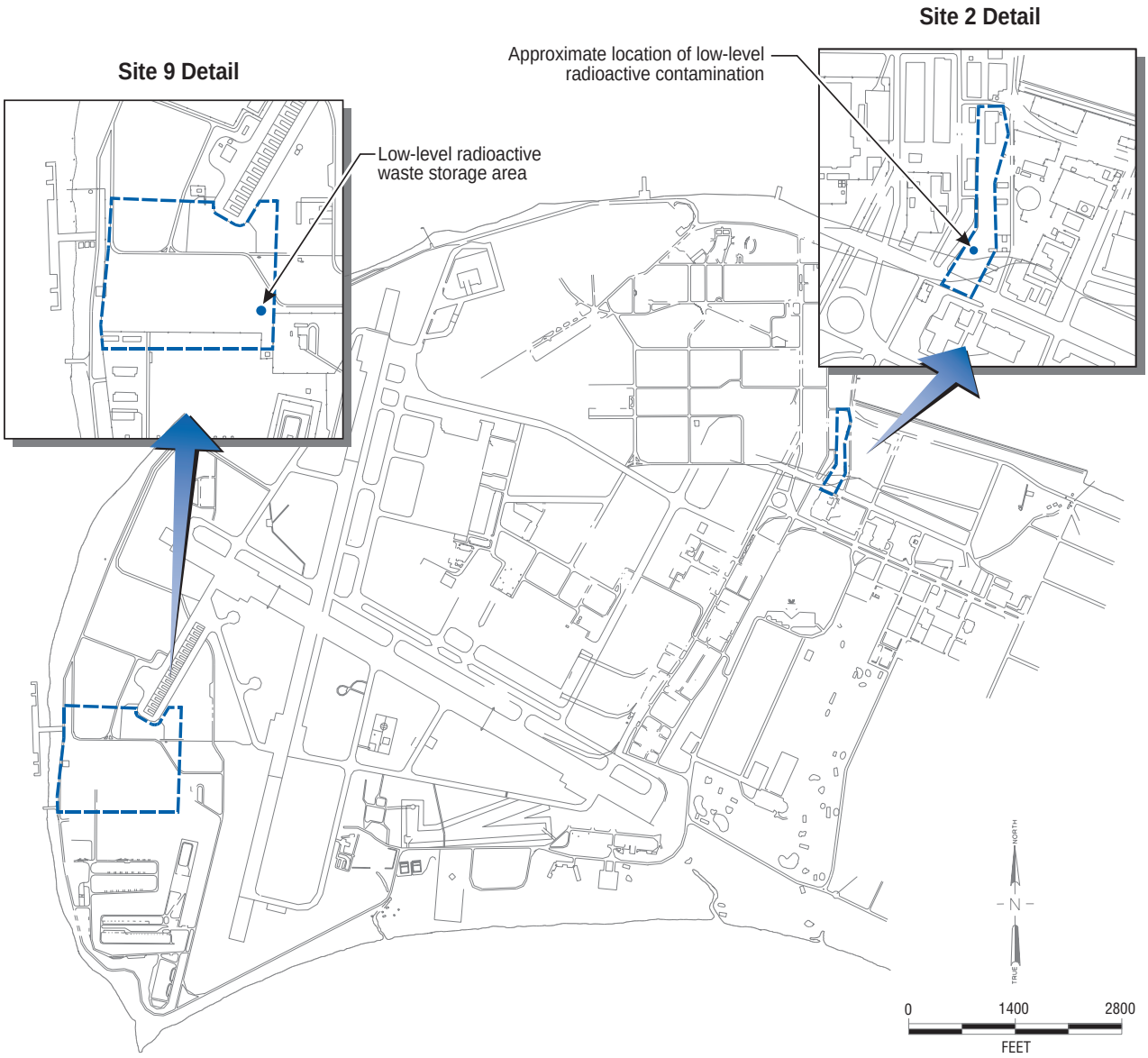

Figure 2 Sites 2 and 9 Location Map

were taken in an area of about 30,000 square feet. The survey showed four areas with radiation levels exceeding 5 picocuries per gram (a very small unit of radioactive contamination).

One area is very tiny (it is too small to appear on Figure 2) and is believed to be the result of a small radioluminescent device buried below 8 inches of soil. Another area is approximately 123 square feet (see Figure 2) with radioactive material dispersed on the surface. Material similar to radium-contaminated slag, previously found and removed in 1995 at Site 10 on NAS North Island, is evident here. It was determined that these two areas of elevated radioactivity will be removed because they exceed the levels above which cleanup is required.

The removal at the first area may be achieved with a shovel and pail because the device is believed to be buried in shallow soil. The second area will require surface excavation of the slag-like material and soil to a maximum depth of 2 feet. The removal will be conducted by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)-trained personnel with appropriate protective equipment. The excavated material will be placed in Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved containers, sampled for other possible contaminants (metals and chemical compounds), and trucked off-site to an approved, permitted disposal facility. Together with the soil excavated from Site 9, two trucks will be needed to carry the drums.

The last two areas of elevated readings are located in parts of the capped landfill where gravel was formerly dumped. Based upon radioactive readings and analyses of samples, it was concluded by the Navy Radiological Affairs Support Office that these two areas with elevated readings result from naturally occurring radioactivity and not from an artificially enhanced (man-made) source. Therefore, no further action is necessary at these two areas.

Site 9

Site 9, located in the southwestern portion of the base (see Figure 2), is the former chemical waste disposal area. A portion of this site was also used to store low-level radioactive waste.

Two radiological surveys of Site 9 were conducted. The first was conducted in 1993 across the entire site and, in particular, in the area of the low-level radioactive waste storage area inside Site 9. The purpose was to determine if small, concentrated pockets of radium were present in the the layer of fill soil that predated the creation of the low-level radioactive waste storage area. The survey was also intended to assess whether radioactive materials had migrated beyond the storage area. Survey results showed that further investigation was only needed in the area of the low-level radioactive waste storage area; in particular, one grout-filled section of concrete culvert pipe of unknown origin. Part of the storage area, including the concrete culvert, was removed in 1993.

The second, two-part survey of the low-level radioactive waste storage area was conducted in July and October 1994. Radiological surveys were performed and soil samples taken. Analytical results of the soil sampling confirmed the radiological survey results, indicating two areas of contamination: one 15 by 15 feet in the northeast corner of the storage area, and the other about 3 feet by 3 feet in the southwest part of the storage area. (These areas are very tiny and therefore do not appear on Figure 2.) Based on prior sampling, contamination is estimated to be limited to the top 2 feet of soil in both areas.

Cleanup at Site 9 will consist of excavating soil to a maximum depth of 2 feet. As with Site 2, removal of soil will be conducted by OSHA-trained personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment. Excavated soil will be placed in DOT-approved containers and trucked off-site to an approved, permitted disposal facility. Two truckloads will be needed to handle both Sites 2 and 9.

Public Involvement

A document review period for the **Draft Action Memorandum for Low-Level Radioactive Material Removal at Sites 2 and 9** was held from May 19 to June 19, 1998. Notices of availability were placed in local newspapers. The document and responses to comments received are available for public review at the NAS North Island information repository, a publicly accessible location where Navy Installation Restoration Program-related documents and information are kept. The information repository is located at the Coronado Public Library, 620 Orange Avenue, in the city of Coronado. The library's hours are:

Monday – Thursday:
10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Friday - Saturday:
10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunday:
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

MAILING LIST

If you did not receive this fact sheet in the mail, then you are not on our mailing list. If you wish to be placed on the NAS North Island mailing list, please complete this form, clip, and mail to: **Ken Mitchell, Public Affairs Officer, Naval Air Station, North Island, Building 605, San Diego, CA 92135**

Name _____

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For More Information . . .

For more information on the environmental cleanup program underway at NAS, please contact:

Ken Mitchell, Public Affairs Office, NAS North Island, Building 605, San Diego, CA 92135
(619) 545-8167
e-mail: kmitchell@nasni.navy.mil

Marsha Mingay, Public Participation Specialist, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 484-5416

See the Navy's Web Site at http://nelp.navy.mil/ir.htm for more information on the NAS North Island cleanup program.

Naval Air Station
NORTH ISLAND
Public Affairs Office
Building 605
San Diego, CA 92135

Inside:

Information on Removal of Low-Level Radioactive Material at NAS North Island